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## ADJECTIVE OR ADVERB?

In volume 30, pp. 334-344 of Paul and Braune's "Beiträge," Professor Franck has raised the question as to the part of speech of the italicized words in the following sentences, whether they are adjectives or adverbs: "ich enmüeze also swache leben / daz ich iu *lieber* wære tot" ("Der arme Heinrich," 754-5) "so that I might not be compelled to live such a miserable life that I would be more acceptable to you if I were dead." "Uns ist noch hiute *liep* vernomen, / ir inneeclichiu triuwe, / ir *liep*, ir leit, ir wunne, ir not" ("Tristan und Isolde," 218-221) "Their great fidelity, their joy, their sorrow, their bliss, their distress are still today pleasing to us when we hear of them." "Diz schoene kindelin / daz wære *schedelich* verloren" ("Gregorius," 687-8) "The beautiful child would be a source of loss to the world if it were to perish." In this last example "schedelich" is a clear adjective form, but Professor Franck calls attention to the fact that ms. J has the adverbial form "schedlichen." Professor Franck thinks that such forms were originally adverbs, but admits that in M. H. G. speech-feeling here had become somewhat unsettled so that adjective forms began to appear. Professor Paul replies on pp. 569-70 of the same volume. He calls attention to the fact that in the long list of such sentences in Grimm's "Grammatik" iv, p. 151-2 only two have the adverbial form: "Daz ist *baz* verborn" "That would be more serviceable to us if left undone." "Es ist ein schedel *baz* verkorn dann ob sin wirt ie mere" "A little injury if not noticed would often be less harmful than if it were provoked to larger proportions." By the translations it can be seen that the writer does not believe that "baz" is here an adverb. It is an adverb used in adjective function just as the adverb "zu" in the following sentence: "Die Tür ist *zu*." The adverb "baz" was also in O. H. G. used as a predicate adjective: "Bi thiú ist nu *baz* zi ware thaz uuir gigruazen, thaz iohanne ouh hiar leid kleib" (Otfried, "Hartm." 97-8) "Therefore it is indeed better that I mention that trouble came also to John." "Thaz *baz* ist, man biuuerbe daz ein man sterbe" (*ib.*

iii. 25, 25) "That it is better that we bring it about that one man die." In the light of such plain facts it is not possible to state with much assurance that "baz" was always an adverb in O. H. G. and M. H. G. This reduces the cases of absolutely sure adverbial forms to the one instance cited by Professor Franck from ms. J. Professor Wilmanns, however, who takes the question up in his "Deutsche Grammatik" iii, p. 742, thinks that the feeling for the adjective form was even in M. H. G. faint and led to its use where in an exact sense the predicate adjective cannot be interpreted as referring to the subject: "Ist ime diu sele danne verlorn, / so wære er *besser* ungeborn" ("D. a. Heinrich," 605-6) "If he then loses his soul, he would be *better-off* if he were never born." We can no longer in this way refer a simple "besser" with this meaning to a personal subject, but it was the common and natural M. H. G. usage. The great grammarian has been a little hasty here in passing judgment. This construction was very firm in M. H. G. and, as adjective and adverb usually had a different form, there were no formal factors that could lead to a confounding of the two forms. In the one absolutely sure case of the use of an adverb in such expressions, as in ms. J. referred to above, there isn't the slightest indication that adverb and adjective have become confounded, for the adverbial form in *-en* has been intentionally chosen as an adverb and no German of that time could possibly have felt it as anything else than an adverb: "Diz schoene kindelin / daz wære *schedlichen* verlorn." The author of ms. J has preferred to change the form of statement a little. If one reads the sentence aloud, first with the adjective *schedelich* and then with the adverb *schedlichen* he can clearly feel the difference in the thought, or rather the form of the thought. In the former case: "The child would be a source of loss to the world if it should perish." In the latter case: "The child would perish in connection with a loss or entailing a loss upon the world." Later when adjective and adverb lost their distinctive endings these two distinct grammatical constructions had exactly the same form: "Das wäre ebenso *gut* (or *besser*) unterblieben." How should we construe this construction today? Would it not be more

natural to construe the form "gut" or "besser" here as an adjective, as the adjective construction was in M. H. G. *much* more common than the adverbial one? Professor Wilmanns says in his "Grammatik" that he always feels the modern form as an *adverb*. Here Professor Wilmanns agrees with Professor Franck. Professor Paul has not expressed himself with regard to his own feeling of the construction where it is still found in current speech. Other Germans to whom this sentence has been submitted all agree in feeling "gut" or "besser" here as an adverb. One thing, however, seems perfectly sure to the writer, namely, that the fact that this form is now felt as an adverb is not the cause of the decay of this construction, but it has rather helped to preserve it in the few cases where it has survived. Whenever the old predicate adjective stood in syntactical relations so unclear as to the form that it could also be felt as an adverb modifying the following verb, the construction has been *well* preserved, altho the original syntactical structure is now misunderstood. Naturally there are not many such cases, for they are only accidental. On the other hand, the original construction is clearly felt where the old predicate adjective cannot be construed as an adverb. Examples are hard to find, for the construction is felt as unnatural in our time. They can occur only in a style far removed from colloquial speech where the life of an older period is dimly felt: "Das ist besser unterblieben" ("Das ist besser, wenn es unterbleibt"). This sentence may be felt as unnatural, but it has the sanction of many centuries of good usage resting upon it. Here it is impossible on account of the tense form employed to construe "besser" as an adverb. Here all to whom this sentence was submitted felt "besser" as an adjective. None of them could feel it as an adjective in "Das wäre besser unterblieben." The old conception "Das wäre besser, *unterblieben*, i. e. (*wenn es*) unterblieben (bliebe)" was quite foreign to them. The construction of "besser" as an adverb was made possible by the tense form of the verb and this modern interpretation has preserved the old form with changed meaning, while the old form with the old meaning seems strange to Germans of our time. This leads

us to say a few words about the origin of the old construction and the causes of its decay.

Professor Paul in his "Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik," Sec. 203, remarks: "Auch neben einem rein prädikativen Adjektiv kommt das prädikative Attribut vor: 'So wäre er maneges bezzer tot' (so wäre er als toter viel besser, d. h. so wäre es viel besser, wenn er tot wäre)." There is here an inconsistency between Professor Paul's statement and his illustration of it. In his statement he calls the adjective "tot" a "prädikatives Attribut," i. e., a predicate appositive, but by his illustration "wenn er tot wäre" he shows clearly that it is not a predicate appositive at all, but an ordinary appositive. It is very common for an ordinary appositive adjective or participle to perform the function of an adverbial clause: "Die Schlange sticht nicht *ungereizt*" (*wenn sie nicht gereizt wird*). This simple explanation removes all the difficulties in the way of a clear understanding of this old construction. The adjective or participle that so often in M. H. G. accompanied a predicate adjective was an appositive to a preceding noun or pronoun. This noun or pronoun was not necessarily a subject, but it might be in some oblique case: "daz *mir* bezzer wäre *begraben*" (quoted by Grimm, "Grammatik" iv, p. 152) "that it would be better for me if I were buried."

Let us return to the sentence quoted by Professor Wilmanns as proof that the predicate adjective sometimes in M. H. G. referred to a subject to which in a strict sense it could not refer: "so wäre er *bezzer* ungeboren." As stated above this sentence is perfectly regular in every respect, but "bezzer" is not used in this sense any more. We must now employ in English "better-off" and in modern German "besser daran" to render the simple M. H. G. "bezzer." Of the state of health, however, we can still use the simple form: "He is better today." Only in a few set expressions do we find this old meaning: "Das wäre besser verschwiegen" "This matter would be more advantageous to us if it could be kept secret." Here we have the old construction and this old meaning, only applied to a thing. Why should this sentence be preserved, while "so wäre er bezzer ungeboren" is not retained in

modern usage? With reference to persons we cannot use simple "besser" here any more. In "Das wäre besser verschwiegen" the construction has been preserved because "besser" is now construed as an adverb. Thus in fact the old construction has not been retained. In looking over the M. H. G. grammars and dictionaries we find a long list of sentences containing this old construction, very few of which could be rendered literally into modern German. The predicate adjectives "gut," "lieb," "besser," "lieber," etc., have changed their meaning. Now "lieb" is not so freely used with reference to things as to persons and often seems out of place with reference to a subject that represents a thing. Moreover, it now often has a different meaning even when it refers to persons. The common words "gut" and "besser" now have quite different meanings: "Es ist in sere guot gelesen" ("Tristan," 171), "It (*i. e.*, the book) will be helpful and stimulating to them if they read it." As can be seen by the translation of this sentence there is another important development in modern English and German which has been a large factor, perhaps, the chief factor, in breaking down this old construction. In the English translation the appositive "gelesen" is expanded into a clause. Modern German also employs a clause here: "wenn sie es lesen." Not only in this particular construction but in general the simple appositive is now very little used in plain prose. It is the characteristic of poetry and elevated discourse: "Selbst Tugend wird zum Laster, falsch geübt." *The very fact that the simple appositive was often ambiguous in that the participle used as an appositive was construed as the verb and the preceding word as an adverb must have often led to an instinctive avoidance of the simple participle and suggested its amplification to the form of a clause.* Modern prose in general tends to develop hypotaxis, where the different adverbial relations of time, place, manner, means, condition, etc. find an accurate formal expression in the language by means of a subordinate clause introduced by an appropriate conjunction. In spite of this tendency we sometimes, however, find in colloquial speech the terse appositive construction: "Die Gans wäre mir lieber gebraten." Grimm in his "Grammatik," iv, p. 152, is

quite positive that "Das ist leicht gesagt" also belongs here, but the writer cannot find anything in the older periods of the language to confirm this position. The form that precedes the participle here seems to be of a different nature than the cases given above. The evidence of English "That is *easily* said but not so *easily* done" and of many similar German expressions, as "Das ist bald gesagt" and "er ist leicht verletzt" "He is *easily* offended," seems to indicate plainly that we have here to do with an adverb and not an adjective.

There is another little group of words where there is a difference of opinion as to the part of speech, namely, "leicht" and "schwer" in connection with an infinitive. In the Grimm dictionary we find the words: "Ferner zahlreiche Fälle, in denen *leicht* adverbial steht: 'ouch half in sere, daz diu kint / so lihte ze gewenenne sint' ('Der arme Heinrich,' 333-4)" = "It was also in his favor that children are so *easy* to train." Benecke, in his glossary to "Iwein," gives the same explanation. The English translation of this passage indicates clearly that in English the form is a predicate adjective in connection with an active infinitive which completes its meaning. In Old High German where adjective and adverb have different forms the *adjective* form is here used: "zi zellenne ist iz *suari*" (Otfrid v, 19-7) "It is difficult to relate." "Uuante siu (*i. e.* scientia ueritatis) *liht* ist ze vernemene" (Williram, 71. 5) "for it is easy to understand." As there is no longer a difference of form here between adjective and adverb the predicate adjective has gradually come to be felt in German as an adverb: "Er ist *schwer* zu überzeugen," "He is *hard* to convince." An English-speaking person still naturally feels such forms as adjectives. He associates the *adverb* with *passive* form: "He is very *difficult* (adjective) to beat," but "He is to be beaten only *with great difficulty*" (adverbial phrase). A great English philologist has here combined the *adjective* with the *passive* form: "The steps are easy to be found by which the word has come to possess its present meaning" (Skeat's "Etym. Dict."). The writer would say here: "The steps are *easily found* or *to be found easily* by which," etc. In German the infinitive here has not de-

veloped passive form and hence there is no formal distinction between the use of the infinitive as a gerundive with passive force and with a modifying adverb on the one hand and its use with active force as the complement of a predicate adjective on the other hand. To judge by the treatment of these expressions in German grammars and dictionaries the infinitive here is now always felt as having passive force and the old predicate adjective is now felt as an adverb modifying the infinitive.

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### ENÉAS AND THOMAS' TRISTAN

Notwithstanding the attention which has been paid to the position of the poem of *Enéas* in medieval French literature, its relation to Thomas' story of *Tristan* has hardly been mentioned. Yet in various characteristics of style, and in some of the points of view, the fragments of *Tristan* are strikingly like certain passages and episodes in *Enéas*. Several years ago in a study of certain features of the narrative poetry of the time, I became persuaded that there might be a connection between these two poems, and that *Enéas* could count Thomas also among the authors it had influenced.<sup>1</sup> This conjecture has recently been strengthened by further evidence of a more definite kind.

We read in Bédier's restoration of Thomas' poem that the Breton knight, Rivalin, took advantage of an armistice with his enemy to visit Mark's court in Cornwall. There he displayed such manly virtues and bore himself so well that he won the love of Mark's sister, Blancheflor. And her love was no ordinary passion. It occasioned quite peculiar symp-

toms. Blancheflor's mind and body were as though set on fire. She wasted away. She trembled constantly. She was bathed at times in perspiration. Nevertheless this strange sickness, which was without remedy, gave her no physical pain. In the midst of health she felt ill, as from the effects of poison. Had the noonday heat poisoned her? Never would she have believed in a disease where heat made her shiver and cold made her sweat, and where heat and cold united to test her endurance.

But Blancheflor was not to languish long. Through the mediation of her nurse she was brought near to Rivalin. Yet her happiness was fleeting, for an invasion soon summoned Rivalin home. He made ready his horses, boats, and armor. Great is Blancheflor's distress at the tidings of his approaching departure, and greater her lamentation when he finally comes to take leave of her. She knows, she declares, that his going will be the signal for her death, and sobbing with despair she faints away in his arms.<sup>2</sup>

In its general outline and trend this episode recalls the story of Dido and Aeneas. The stranger who comes by sea, who unconsciously wins the love of the princess of the country, who accepts her love and who is finally forced to leave her in obedience to higher demands, her reproaches, despair and fainting. In either instance another woman, attendant or sister, is a confidant in the matter. The likeness, we repeat, is wholly general, bearing only on the main points. Yet Thomas was conscious of the resemblance. For when Rivalin rode out to the tournament where he attracted the attention of the women of the court, Thomas paused to meditate on that peculiarity of the sex which makes it value what it cannot attain and despise what it can, "as it happened in the case of Dido, who loved so that she burned herself alive, when her beloved, who had come from a foreign land, left her."<sup>3</sup>

Now is there any good reason for believing

<sup>1</sup> "Some Features of Style in Early French Narrative Poetry (1150-1170)," *Modern Philology*, October, 1905, April, 1906, April, 1907. See particularly the number for April, 1906 (pp. 536, 537), where Tristan's soliloquy on Isol's loyalty is compared with Lavinia's monologue in *Enéas*. The versification of the two poems was also found to correspond (April, 1907, p. 667).

<sup>2</sup> J. Bédier, *Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas*, I, pp. 2-21. E. Kölbing, *Die nordische und die englische Version der Tristan-Sage*, I, c. I-XIII.

<sup>3</sup> Kölbing, I. c., c. IV.